

The Housemother's Guide

By Edith M. Stern

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The
HOUSEMOTHER'S
GUIDE

EDITH M. STERN

IN COLLABORATION WITH
HOWARD W. HOPKIRK

This guide book for housemothers and housefathers in children's institutions deals realistically with the many problems encountered in bringing up other people's children. It abounds with practical suggestions and gives the reader new insight into the whys of relationships. Any housemother who studies this sympathetic, common-sense discussion will gain a better understanding of children and their needs.

Mrs. Stern is experienced in this kind of writing. She is the author of similar booklets, *The Attendant's Guide*, written for attendants in mental hospitals, and *Mental Illness: A Guide for the Family*. Her ability to write simply and understandably has brought these two booklets wide acclaim.

The authority of the guide is assured by the collaboration of Howard W. Hopkirk, Executive Director of the Child Welfare League of America and author of the well-known book, *Institutions Serving Children*. Mr. Hopkirk has had long experience with children's institutions both in his present capacity and earlier as houseparent and executive. The manuscript has been read and approved by outstanding authorities in the fields of psychiatry and child welfare.

The booklet is priced at cost to make it available to all potential readers in children's institutions of every kind. Special prices are offered on quantities as follows:

1 to 9 copies	50 cents each
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BY EDITH M. STERN

IN COLLABORATION WITH
HOWARD W. HOPKIRK

Executive Director
Child Welfare League of America

New York

THE COMMONWEALTH FUND

1946

Publisher's Note

THE COMMONWEALTH FUND is glad to make this booklet available as a contribution to better care of children in institutions, but publication does not necessarily imply endorsement of all of the content. The authors have had entire freedom and are wholly responsible for all statements of fact and opinion.

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TO ELSA CASTENDYCK

*In appreciation of her knowledge,
her selflessness, and all her help*

You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of
the infinite, and He bends you with His might
that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the Archer's hand be
for gladness;

For even as he loves the arrow that flies, so
He loves also the bow that is stable.

KAHLIL GIBRAN

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Foreword

The publication of this book is a sign of the times. At the beginning of this century the worker in an institution for children was expected to read nothing—unless it be the rules prescribed by the superintendent or the board of directors. Now superintendents and board members realize that rules alone are deadening and that workers require training whereby they can apply sound principles to their important and ever changing tasks.

Improvements in the staffing of institutions already are producing tremendous and highly desirable changes in the quality of the care provided. That the housemother is becoming a highly skilled worker and that those improvements in service which are most worth while are being wrought by her are facts significant to those in charge of institutions.

What makes a child strong, strong in character as well as in muscle? This is a question which can be answered only in part by the woman who takes care of the child of another, but it should often be asked. Mrs.

Stern in this guide has stirred just such thinking in behalf of children whose very presence in an institution places them especially in need of careful understanding, children who require a full share of the strength with which life's battles are won. Their lives are complicated, and for many reasons they are confused. To simplify and enrich living for such children are among the most rewarding experiences an adult can have.

The few pamphlets that have been written especially for housemothers indicate the need for a book as readable and practical as this. *A Manual for Cottage Mothers*, published by the Child Welfare League of America in 1930, now out of print, was one of the earliest. Rather than revise the manual, which was too brief but in considerable demand, it seemed far better to encourage Mrs. Stern to write this more thorough and up-to-date *Housemother's Guide*.

It seems proper here to identify two other pamphlets intended for housemothers. These and a few existing books on institutional care and carefully chosen publications written for parents should be accessible to every worker in an institution for children. With them in the institution's central library and a copy of *The Housemother's Guide* in the hands of each woman in charge of children, an effective study course can be conducted. A study outline entitled *Understanding Children*, prepared jointly by the Child Welfare League of America, 130 East 22nd Street, New York, N.Y., and the Mental Hygiene Committee

of the State Charities Aid Association, 105 East 22nd Street, New York, N.Y. (revised in 1945), provides bibliographies on various aspects of child care. The other reference, *Principles of Child Care in Institutions*, a handbook for staff study and discussion compiled by The Ohio Committee on Children's Institutions, was published (revised edition) in 1941 by the Division of Public Assistance, State Department of Public Welfare, Oak and Ninth Streets, Columbus, Ohio. It reports the opinions of several contributors, each on a separate subject, somewhat like the proceedings of a conference. Mrs. Stern has been brief and has spared her readers long reading lists, so that *The Housemother's Guide* will be welcomed by the busy worker who might be discouraged by a bibliography.

To assist Mrs. Stern and offer suggestions as she wrote this book was a rewarding experience. A writer by profession, especially devoted to this task, she kept clearly in mind the child as well as the housemother. Her sympathetic interpretation of this key position in child welfare work is in itself a substantial and timely contribution. It will aid the superintendent as well as the housemother, and will help both to keep pace with the progress in other institutions.

The war made it exceedingly difficult to manage an institution. Workers of any kind were hard to find, especially workers who had basic qualifications for serving children. This led to increases in salaries and improvements in working conditions. Some institu-

tions lagged in making such changes for the better and some even now must make up for lost time. Good workers still are hard to find. The superintendent who develops a proficient staff not only will buy books for staff training and will supply new workers with them, but also he will consider the adequacy or inadequacy of salaries, vacations, weekly and daily relief periods, attractiveness of staff living quarters, and the load of work required of each employee. Little is gained if a capable worker is hired only to leave because working conditions are intolerable. Furthermore the training of a worker extends through months and years. Salary schedules should allow annual increases as skill is acquired.

A true picture of children's institutions in 1950 doubtless will show almost no new buildings constructed during the 1940's. This means the use for several years of many dormitories and cottages which are obsolete. Housemothers must recognize and put up with these conditions, just as American families are adjusting as best they can to cramped and obsolete housing. But superintendents and board members will be shortsighted unless they lay plans to modernize or replace dormitories or cottages which are too large and which make meager provisions for children and staff. Sometimes the reduction in capacity of a unit will allow more homelike provision for the children and more adequate space for housemothers.

The importance of the work and its challenge to the

housemother justify these and other investments. It is worth spending a life of service at a job so productive. To take the place, during fifteen or twenty years, of dozens of real parents, and to do this successfully, is big business—the business of helping the dependent become independent. Therefore as the true nature of this work becomes more widely recognized, it will attract persons who will insist upon literature and other facilities whereby they may learn to fulfill their mission.

In any dimension the task is big. Mrs. Stern has done well to restrict the scope and principal purpose of this book and thus to increase its value within those limits. She has omitted any reference to infants or pre-school-age children. Infants are more suitably served in foster homes and the care of children from two to six is highly specialized and requires separate treatment, whether they live in foster homes or institutions.

There is great variety, however, in the types of institutions where this guide will be helpful. Institutions for dependent children constitute the largest group, but it could be used as effectively in training schools for the mentally defective, the blind, those with hearing defects, and those with behavior problems (often designated as delinquents). It will be of value also to workers in boarding schools and camps.

The purpose of this guide, though it includes many practical details, is to establish attitudes rather than to describe procedures, to stimulate thinking more than

to present a blueprint. The housemother who reads the following pages will find them free of technical lingo but consistent with good practice and professional training. She can use the book by herself whether her institution be small or large. Likewise it is suitable for group discussion, as in staff meetings or institutes. It can be expected to mark the beginning of study which will lead beyond its pages.

The *breaking in* of a worker can be shortened by weeks or months by study of this guide. The lack of study has meant only the *breaking* of many because the multiplicity of duties and lack of preparation for them proved confusing and discouraging.

The care of bees and poultry requires skill. It takes great self-discipline and study on the part of adults to train Seeing-Eye dogs and still more effort and time to train the trainers of these sensitive animals. The owner of a large racing stable, when told about the lack of trained workers in children's institutions, was shocked. He said, "We never would develop horses fit to race if we were so careless." The day has come to have the staff of every institution well trained. This book pioneers in helping workers to reach this goal.

HOWARD W. HOPKIRK

New York, September, 1946

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I *In Place of Mother*

You have one of the most important jobs in the world. In many ways you are taking the place of your children's mothers.

Other people besides you play a part in their lives: the trustees or board members of the institution in which you work, the superintendent, the nurse, the case worker, the psychologist or psychiatrist, the doctor. But no one has so intimate and constant an association with the children as you. It is you who are in direct charge of them, who supervise their washing and their dressing and their eating, their rising and their going to bed, their work and their play; you who are at hand to hear their troubles and triumphs as and when they occur; you who are nearest when they need help in the problems and difficulties that come up every day. Above all, it is you to whom they must turn for immediate affection and warmth.

Although your job, like a real mother's, is not well rewarded in glory or money, it is highly complex.

Were you a child psychologist, a graduate nurse, a dietician, an educator, and a recreation director rolled into one, but little of your training and knowledge would go to waste. You have to be a housekeeper and a seamstress and a teacher of manners and behavior. Possibly you may be called upon to act as a dietician, a first-aid-er, or an arbiter of quarrels. But also like a real mother's, the essential part of your work is not so much to keep in line well-scrubbed youngsters in immaculate rooms, not so much to maintain orderliness and mannerliness and regularity of habits and obedience, as it is to provide the soil of understanding and affection without which boys and girls cannot flower self-confident and happy.

Whether she be a real or a substitute mother, this is a continual task that takes the best of any woman's mind, heart, and energies.

This book is an introduction, a guide, to housemothers' care of their children. It does not, and cannot, cover every problem that might possibly come up, for no two children or situations are exactly alike and therefore there are no hard and fast rules which should be invariably followed. But if it gives you some help in carrying out these principles: that your children need love, self-confidence, and the opportunity to develop initiative; that they must be understood and treated as individuals with individual differences; that meeting their needs, emotional as well as physical, is the most important part of your job; and that their

life in the institution must not only be satisfactory in itself but also prepare them for life in the world later, it will have served its purpose.

A good housemother does not spring into existence, but develops by way of experience and by earnest, thoughtful, patient devotion to her children's needs. There is no such thing as being a "born mother," nor does one necessarily become a good one by having children of her own. Some of the finest housemothers knew little about children when they embarked upon their work, but capable of loving and blessed with open minds, they learned on the job.

As you proceed in your work, you will find that it gives you the opportunity to expand emotionally and has rewards in personal satisfactions. For instance, you will be in steady contact with the young and the living, and this is always a vitalizing experience. You watch children develop, healthier and happier thanks to your care and cherishing; if you have ever enjoyed tending a plant you know in a small way what joy there can be in such activity. You will feel your children's confidence in you grow, and, too, your own confidence in yourself as you find yourself increasingly able to help them.

Not only the heartwarming satisfaction, but also the challenges and responsibilities of your work are tremendous. In many cases, you, and only you, stand between a child and desolation.

2 *A Few Words to Housefathers*

This book is for you, too. It is addressed to house-mothers merely because the great majority of those who care directly for children in institutions are women.

Perhaps you are in charge of older boys. Here you are in place not only of Mother but of Father and older brother too, and what you do and how you treat your boys can make or break them emotionally. Children who are in your institution because their behavior has been a problem to the community are children, too. They, like all other children, need care, and help, and contentment, and self-confidence, and the warm feeling of belonging, in order to live comfortably in the institution now and productively in the world later.

Or perhaps you work in a cottage with your wife. Then of course you take the place of Father rather than of Mother. It is a vital role too, for children need the influence of both sexes if they are to develop fully as human beings. For all the children in your cottage

your companionship, your judgment, your kindly authority, your understanding will round out the work of the housemother, albeit she may be more immediately concerned with their physical care. For boys you may stand as the man they know best, and embody desirable characteristics of manhood. For instance, you may be the first man they have known who sticks consistently and conscientiously at his daily work.

Those children who have come from homes where there was quarreling, disharmony, even brutality between their parents, will have their first wholesome opportunity to observe a good relationship between husband and wife. All benefit by a setup that brings the institution a step nearer the approximation of normal family living. Yours, like the housemother's, is a great opportunity for service.

3 *These Are Your Children*

Basic in doing what is most helpful to children is to take them as they are and not as you wish they were. Only by accepting each child's individual limitations and capacities, his strengths and weaknesses, do you free yourself to help him to make the most of himself by going on from where he really is.

What you are to any particular child depends upon his particular background and needs. You ought, therefore, first of all to know why he is in the institution. Some institutions make their case records available to housemothers and some do not. But whatever the rules in the one in which you work, ask the superintendent or case worker for at least enough information to give you some understanding of each child in your care and of the experiences that have made him the individual he is.

First, there are the children who come from broken homes and whose personalities have been somewhat affected by their unhappy experiences. They may have

been shocked and bewildered by the death of a parent, or by a mother's desertion, or by serious illness that left no one to care for them, or by poverty that made it necessary to have temporary care. They still have their roots, however, in their own families, and strong pulls towards their mothers or fathers or perhaps beloved older brothers or sisters from whom they have been separated. You do best for boys and girls like these, not by trying to act as if you were replacing their mothers, but by acting for their mothers. Maintain and strengthen the ties they have with their families while at the same time you give them, lonely and often frightened as they are, the definite feeling that you are there to do for them.

The second general group among your children includes those who have been so greatly deprived of love and secure family life, who have been through so much that their personalities have been seriously injured. Some of them were perhaps the children of unmarried mothers and unwanted even before they were born; others were ill-treated or hated by their families, were cold-shouldered by their communities. Such unloved, kicked-about youngsters have and are problems. Too young, too confused to express their deep hurts, they cover them up or get back at the world by various kinds of unpleasant behavior. They may be rude, ungrateful, belligerent; they may act cocky to hide their nobody-wants-me feelings, and they are likely to be disobedient. You know from your own ex-

perience how, just when you are feeling the most ill at ease, or hurt, or shy, or unhappy, you are most likely to talk louder than usual, or become boastful or aggressive in order to seem as if you don't care; in short, you act the opposite to the way you feel. With children behavior is even more likely to be the reverse of what is in their hearts. They are unable to put their emotional difficulties into words, and the way they act is their inarticulate appeal for help, their only way of telling the world something is wrong. Often, try as you may, you cannot get children whose personalities have been injured to respond to affection, and your best efforts may be met with a surly: "Nobody ever loved me, and you don't either!" Of all your children, you will find these the hardest both to like and to understand.

But of all your children they probably need you the most, so you must never let down in your efforts to make them feel loved and wanted, to help them towards greater happiness. There is no general rule that can possibly be applied to cover the best treatment of all children with damaged personalities; you will have to find your way with each individual. Discover the chinks and crannies in his wall of defiance so you can enter to give him a sense of self-confidence and belonging; try, for instance, to discover his special interests and abilities and give him the satisfaction of using them. Take his coldness to you in your stride; if you simply can't understand why he doesn't seem to

respond to anything you do for him, get help from the psychologist, superintendent, or case worker.

Just as your children vary in personality, so you will find that they vary in intelligence. A few may be exceptionally bright. Some, at the other extreme, may be actually feeble-minded. Such children, of course, ought to be in a special institution for mental defectives, but if there is no careful psychological testing before admission, they may have slipped into yours. Others are likely to be dull and slow-learning, not so much because they lack innate mental capacity as because unhappy experiences have so confused and disturbed them emotionally that they have been unable to make the most of themselves. Still others, of average mental capacity, may have come from such culturally inferior homes that they were never stimulated to develop intellectually.

Be patient with dull children; get help from the social worker if necessary in understanding them and in enabling them to feel self-confident and happy enough to learn to the full extent of which they are capable.

Even the slowest learner may have an ability to do something well, if not with his head, with his hands; create opportunities for him to use it. Some apparently stupid children may be struggling with language difficulties because their parents are foreign born. Others may have reading and speech difficulties that require special handling by experts.

If a child seems unable to keep his room right, or to learn to set the table, or to perform other simple tasks, be careful that you do not label him hopelessly dull and unable to do anything well. Such an attitude on your part may doom him to a permanent feeling of inferiority and general incompetence. Find the things he can do well and see that he has the satisfaction of doing them.

As for those of your children who are bright, try to see that they are not held down by institutional conditions, which tend to be leveling. Give them enough to do wholesomely to occupy their exceptional brains and energies. On the other hand, be careful not to push them beyond their real capacities. Avoid promoting any special talent beyond the point where it is really useful: for instance, by all means encourage a child talented musically to entertain his own group, but avoid having him entertain in public until he is able to do so by the sheer merit of his art. It is far better to help a talented child to become a well-rounded personality than to overstress his special ability and let him get grandiose, unrealistic ideas.

From none of your children, affectionate or cold, pleasing or displeasing, tractable or difficult, intelligent or slow, should you ever expect thank-yous. To express appreciation is a part of adult, not of childish, behavior. Good mothers never demand gratitude and neither should good mother-substitutes.

What's more, your children have nothing about

which to be especially grateful; quite the contrary! It is nothing more than the inalienable right of every child to have care. Most children get it from their own parents in their own homes. Your children are not that fortunate.

In too many institutions children are constantly reminded how lucky they are to be "in this nice place" thanks to the "kind trustees" or benevolent founder. "Where would you be," a well-intentioned but thoughtless housemother may say, "if you weren't here?" This is a cruel rubbing in of the dependence of dependent children, the putting of an extra emotional burden upon a child already grievously bothered and worried by his own home's having failed him. And at best asking for gratitude for what his parents do not give him serves no purpose. Nor can a child grasp the idea of an endowment, nor of obligation to board members, nor of any need to be thankful because he is being fed and housed and clothed. If your children turn to you, that is their best way of saying, "Thank you," and the best evidence that you are successful in your work.

Also, be especially careful not to take out on any of your children your disgust with their parents for being shiftless, cruel, neglectful, or whatnot. The degree to which a child responds to you is often exactly proportionate to the degree to which he feels that, though you may realize his parents' faults and limitations, you do not condemn them.

4 *Most of Your Children Have Families*

Although the word orphanage is still too much used, actually nowadays only about one in every twenty children in institutions is a full orphan, and your attitude towards your children's parents is almost as important as your attitude towards them.

If a youngster still loves his mother however badly she has treated him, and you act or talk as if she were no good, it will set him against you. No matter how absurd or inappropriate or tawdry the toys or clothing she sends him, never criticize them; remember, whatever you think of her presents, they mean a great deal to him. Similarly, to remind an already hurt child that his mother is immoral, or that his parents neglect him, or that his father is not fit to look after him, is only turning a knife in him that may cause him to strike back at you through his behavior.

Help your children to remember all that is good and attractive about their parents, all there is in them to respect and admire, rather than the reverse. Find

something complimentary to say about a child's mother; comment favorably about her smile, or her eyes, or her dress. Remember that though you may privately consider her drab and unattractive, she's the most beautiful person in the world to him. Play up even faint signs of parents' interest in their children: "Your father certainly writes to you often," or "Wasn't it lovely that your mother remembered your birthday?" When children boast about their families, let them get away with it even if you know their tales of wealth or accomplishment or indications of parental love are untrue; they need this pitiful pretense in order not to feel too forlorn.

You may find a few children who despise their parents, and with good reason. If they express hatred of Mother or Father, often the best way to help them is not to discuss the situation but to listen sympathetically, neither confirming nor contradicting them.

Encourage parents to visit and do everything you can to make it pleasant for them on visiting day. Even if it makes extra trouble for you, try to arrange, within the regulations of your institution, for children to visit at home or to go on little excursions with their mothers or fathers. Sunday is a visiting day in most institutions; try to arrange to have parents attend church services with their children. Not only are their ties with their own families, however weak they may seem to you, one of the most wholesome and mentally healthful ways to give your children the sense of be-

longing that all of us need, but also, by strengthening those ties, you strengthen your own position as substitute mother. Your children will sense that you are not trying to come between them and their own parents, but that you are working along with them, and they will tend to respond to you accordingly.

Naturally you will not like or admire all the parents you will meet or hear about in the course of your work, but regardless of your private opinion of a mother or father, remember that it isn't easy for any parents, even the worst of them, completely to give over their offspring to the care of strangers. No one likes to admit, even to himself, that for one reason or another he can't look after his own. Some of the most irritating parents with whom you have to deal, the men and women who come in critical and demanding and cocky, are just the ones who feel worst inside about turning over their children to others. Be patient with them. The way people, both adults and children, behave often is no reflection of the way they feel, but is a confused, unhappy attempt to cover up what's really eating them.

Occasionally parents are denied, perhaps by court order, the right to visit their children. If, as happens once in a long while, a parent barges in despite such prohibition, promptly inform the head of your institution about the unauthorized visit and let him or her handle the situation. Consult the superintendent or

case worker as to how you should discuss it with the child.

On the other hand, you may encounter fine parents with real understanding of their children's problems. Talk things over with such parents, lend a sympathetic ear to their suggestions, and try to learn all you can from them.

You would wrong your children should you act as though they were exclusively yours. Avoid confusing them, and possibly antagonizing their parents, by insisting or even expecting that they call you "Mother." About seventy-five per cent of all children in institutions sooner or later return to their own families. So, though for a period you perform the invaluable service of acting as your children's mother, all the while they are in your care you should never forget that they will not be yours for life. Even to real parents children are bestowed only in trust for the period of preparation for living. As the real mother gives up her child when he reaches maturity, so will you sometime have to give up each of your children.

A housemother who envelops her children with the possessive kind of affection that shuts out everyone else is only building up heartbreak for them and herself when the inevitable time of parting comes; such a course is almost as harmful as giving them no love at all.

Happily, love is not like so many pounds of sugar

or pairs of shoes so that what is given to one must be taken away from another; quite the contrary, the ability to love grows with loving. If you work to hold your children and their families to each other, if you consistently help them to build on the base of natural family affection wherever it exists, however slightly, you lose nothing and you give much.

5 *When Home Has a Capital H*

Love is only one, though one of the most important, of the needs of all children in or out of institutions. Others are good physical care, the chance to be successful at something, and the sense of belonging in a group. Unless a child has these, he cannot be healthy and happy and at ease in the world.

With the exception of the physical care, it is harder to meet these universal, basic needs of boys and girls in Homes than in homes. You must therefore be continually on the alert to attempt to overcome the inevitable handicaps of living in an institution. This doesn't mean that you should pretend you are all "just one big happy family," a pretense your children, however little able to express themselves, will surely and sadly see through. After all, even the most maternal house-mother in the smallest cottage group can't exactly duplicate the setup of mother and the usual family group. What is possible, however, is frankly to recognize the peculiar conditions of institutional life and

then do all you can to make up for their abnormalities and lacks.

First of all remember that, though everybody everywhere has to conform to certain group standards, the child in an institution gets an extra strong dose of conforming. He has to be with a group all the time. The strain of this is especially hard on the youngsters who can't hold their own with the others. Make special efforts to encourage the boy or girl who "is never any trouble," who withdraws into a corner, who is shoved about by the rest of the group. In the normal family home, where such children have to cope with only a few people, it is relatively easier for them to find some place for themselves. In an institution timid children who keep to themselves are all too likely to be overwhelmed, to the permanent detriment of their self-assurance and ability to get along in the world, unless someone gives them special consideration, draws them out, bolsters their self-confidence, and stimulates them to participate in group activities.

Second, the normal share of individual attention that nearly all children get in normal homes is pretty hard to provide in an institution. The simple mathematics of the situation makes this obvious. A mother has only a few children among whom to divide her time. A substitute mother has many, with the result that, unless special efforts are made, some or all of her children will be overlooked as personalities. In inferior institutions it is pitiful to see the way children

run up to any visiting strangers, clutch their hands or attempt to kiss them; such behavior is a sure sign that they are emotionally starved, that their housemothers are failing them in one of the most important aspects of child care. It is even more essential for you to give each of your children some individual attention and tenderness than it is to train them in good habits. Help yourself to remember this by thinking always in terms of Bobby and Susan and Harold and Jane as so many separate little personalities with different needs, and never in terms of lumping them as "the children."

It is, of course, by no means easy to distribute your time and energy wisely when you are in charge of a large group of children, and no rules can be laid down to serve in all cases. Your heart and good sense must guide you in giving additional attention to this or that child while at the same time you remain fair to all of them.

Many children in institutions have an exaggerated craving for affection and make constant demands for praise and attention from their housemothers. Obviously you cannot satisfy them at the expense of others less persistent. But you will find as you consistently portion out just shares of warmth and affection to these love-starved boys and girls, as you gradually make up for the emotional deprivations they have suffered from being neglected by unloving families or separated from loving ones, they will come around to more normal behavior.

Third, except in the handful of institutions with small modern cottages, the sheer size of the buildings and numbers of children housed in them tend to make individuals feel overwhelmed and lost. Obviously you cannot rebuild your institution nor cut down the number of your children, but you have means of combating much impersonal vastness. Plead for having huge dormitories cut up into smaller spaces through remodeling; if you don't succeed in that, suggest some kind of partitions low enough to allow circulation of air unless each unit has one or more windows; if that request fails too, beg at least for screens. In dayrooms and playrooms, often, as every interior decorator knows, you can achieve a sense of small space by mere rearrangement of furniture, introducing color or breaking wall space with pictures. Divide large groups into smaller groups whenever you can for games, walks, and various activities. Bear in mind your children's personalities when you make up your groups: for example, one or two shy youngsters thrust into a crowd of bossy ones can't be very happy, nor will those uninterested in sports be comfortable with athletes. By treating each one of your children as an individual with individual problems you win half the battle against unhomelike space and numbers.

Fourth, so many little things taken for granted in family living are impracticable in an institution, raiding the icebox for snacks, for instance, or getting in an extra hour's sleep. It's the same story on the emotional

side. A youngster may need to have the opportunity to exercise his or her one special little ability in order to have the feeling of success. In a home, if a boy has a knack for tinkering, or a girl for cooking, he or she can use it naturally. In an institution, on the other hand, the opportunities have to be deliberately created, and it is an important part of your job to create them.

Then, too, in a home it's so easy and natural to have one's own possessions, while in a Home it isn't. To counteract all the furniture and equipment that must be shared in common, be sure that each of your children feels something is all his own. It might be a boy's handful of junky tools, far dearer in his eyes than the fanciest carpentry equipment provided by the trustees for all the children to use together. It might be a little girl's disreputable looking rag doll. It might be a teenager's collection of buttons or stamps or snapshots. Make sure each child has a place to keep what belongs to him safe from the others. Within the regulations of your institution, permit your children to decorate the dormitory space by their beds with whatever pin-ups or trinkets they please. We live in a civilization where property is very important for self-esteem, and the child without any of his own has a lost and bitter feeling likely to express itself in stealing or destruction of other people's.

Finally, and perhaps most hampering to children's normal development, an institution has many more rules and regulations than even the strictest home.

Some of these, such as rising hours, bedtimes, and restrictions about leaving the premises are unavoidable. But to avoid the peril of children's becoming institutionalized, that is, incapable of making their own decisions and acting on their own initiative, whenever it is consistent with group living and the safety of the youngsters for whom you are responsible, let them follow their preferences and do as much on their own as you possibly can.

In too many institutions housemothers are hampered in giving their children the amount of freedom they need, the chance to follow their own bents and to make their own decisions, by a mass of rules and regulations dating from the "children-should-be-seen-and-not-heard" era. Because nobody has ever taken the small trouble of writing them off, such antiquated and irksome restrictions remain harmfully to repress the unfortunate youngsters who must live by them. So long as any rule is in force of course you will have to see that your children obey it, but by all means, if you believe that a regulation in your institution is unnecessary or superfluous, talk it over with your superintendent to see whether it couldn't be eliminated. You are in the key position to know which restrictions really benefit your children and which make life less pleasant for them to no purpose, and if you don't speak up, who will?

All of us learn most through trial and error and our mistakes; children who are told everything, who

do everything by routine, lack the chance to make any. Better than laying down the law that no Sunday clothes may be worn on weekdays, for instance, let your children wear what they please especially on occasions that seem important to them; they'll soon learn better if they find out that they have no Sunday clothes left! Nor will a child ever learn to take care of money if you insist that it be handed over to you to keep under lock and key.

Naturally, if you have a large group of children under your supervision, they cannot have the same freedom as children living with their own families. For example, in a home there is no reason why boys and girls can't run in and out of doors at will. It is quite different in a Home where the only way you can keep track of your children's whereabouts is to insist that they ask permission to enter or leave the playground. All the more, then, because of necessary restrictions, try to eliminate unnecessary ones. Consider whether it is really essential to require children to walk in lines or to ask permission to play with their own toys!

In the last analysis, nothing you do can transform a Home into a home. But by constantly working to minimize the differences between the two, you can get your children very near to the enjoyable childhood, the full opportunity to develop normally and wholesomely which is every human being's birthright.

You start in as soon as a child is admitted.

6 *A Child's First Few Days in the Home*

Nearly always a child's first few days in an institution are hard on him; often to him it is a strange, huge, terrifying place to which he probably hasn't wanted to come. Without having had anything to say about it, he has been separated from his family, from everyone he knows and who knows him. However unpleasant the home from which he was uprooted, it was still his home, and being put into a Home makes him feel set apart from all those luckier boys and girls who take living with their families for granted.

Each child new to the institution needs your help to ease him over the painful change from family to institutional life, and very special attention the first day. Even if he has been well prepared for the placement by a case worker, when the move is actually made he is more than likely to be shocked and bewildered. Consider how a mere change of school can upset a child, and you realize how formidable a jar transportation from a family to an institution can be.

Institutions for dependent children increasingly have discontinued the practice of placing newcomers for a period in a separate dormitory or building, so probably a new child will go immediately into your care. The way you handle the situation may set his attitude towards you and the institution, and so his behavior, for better or for worse during his entire stay.

Receive him as if you were a hostess receiving a welcome guest. Introduce him to other children and staff members. Show him about. "This is where you will sleep." "The toilet is here." "Here is where you can keep your things safe"—not: "This is where your things belong." Make him feel that matters are arranged for his welfare and comfort rather than that you are laying down the law.

In the same warm motherly way outline such regulations as it is necessary he know immediately, and only those. There will be time enough for him to learn the rest when he feels more at home. It is not easy for children just coming from the free and easy atmosphere of family living suddenly to accustom themselves to set schedules and group routines.

Be sure to explain the reason for each rule and requirement with which you have to acquaint him. "You see," you might say, "here you all have to go to bed at the same time, because if one went at one time and one at another, the children already in bed couldn't get to sleep." Or, "A bell will wake you in the morning. There are so many people to cook for here that every-

body has to be ready for breakfast at the same time or we couldn't all be fed." Given the whys and wherefores, a new child will more readily fall in with regulations. Moreover, children made to obey arbitrarily ("Because I say so," or "Just because . . .," or "That's what you must do") are in danger of becoming unthinking and institutionalized.

It is thoughtful to ask a new arrival, "Are you hungry?" If it is impossible to give him something to eat, at least inquire, "Would you like a drink?" Schedules permitting, you might ask, "Do you feel like resting for a little while or would you rather play?" or "Shall I read to you?"—anything, in fact, to reassure him that you are concerned with his comfort and enjoyment.

Encourage him to ask questions about life in the institution. It is unwise, however, to promise you will answer all of them; simply assure him you will do your best to answer all you can. Questions such as, "Why did they send me here?" or "How long will I have to stay?" are best referred to the case worker or the superintendent, but be sure to add, "Anyway we're certainly glad to have you here."

In well-run institutions a child soon after he is admitted must go for a physical examination. Many children have a terror of doctors, so if a child protests against going to the physician's office, be patient with him. Explain why he must have a physical check-up: "Everyone here sees the doctor and he helps to keep

us well." If you can possibly spare the time, go along with him to the doctor's office; remember that his mother probably accompanied him to doctors' offices.

In most good private boarding schools and in many institutions a congenial child his own age or a little older is appointed to act as guide or sponsor to a new child. This practice is excellent for both children concerned. The established resident gets the satisfaction that comes from knowing something valuable to somebody else and so gains in assurance; he benefits by assuming responsibility and he learns hospitality and kindliness. The newcomer is likely to feel more at ease with a guide of his own age than with an adult. Also, thus shepherded, his entrance into group life is made easier than if he had to make his way alone.

Even if you delegate a guide, however, you still remain in place of the child's mother, so stay with him as much as possible during his first day. Give him special attention all along the line; lonely and strange and upset as he is, you may be sure he needs it whether his outward behavior is subdued, weepy, insolent, or surly.

Bedtime is the zero hour for a child wrenched from home, to whom the institution is still new and unfamiliar. Sleeping in a dormitory surrounded by strange children is a distressing change from sleeping in one's own bed at home. Conversely, a child accustomed to going to bed in a crowded tenement room may find it equally frightening to be in a room alone

or with only one or two other children. That miserable first night, be sure to tuck a new child in.

Avoid snap judgment on new children. It is a mistake, for example, to assume that a youngster is "dumb" or abnormally shy because he seems hesitant and tongue-tied in the beginning. Everything he's experiencing now is strange to him: the physical surroundings, the institutional way of life, the adults and children about him. Very likely he feels too confused and ill at ease to be talkative. Or, before he came to the institution, he may have been crushed by ill-treatment or neglect. It will take a period of kindly, understanding treatment before such a child can prove himself, so reserve judgment on newcomers' intelligence until they have had a good chance to thaw out in the warmth of your care.

Realize too that every child brings with him to the institution not only his own person but the manners and morals of his parents and his social group. Perhaps where he formerly lived, swearing and stealing and untidiness and bad table manners were simply the order of the day. A child with an undesirable background cannot change overnight, and you will only wear out yourself and him if you attempt the impossible.

Coming to an institution, a child has more than enough new to learn at best; if his social behavior falls far below your standards, he should not be burdened further with carping and criticisms of behavior no one ever before told him was wrong. If you are concerned

lest he be a bad example to your other children, indicate to them, though of course not in his presence, that he doesn't yet know "how we behave here" but that you know he'll learn as they did. As time goes on a newcomer will acquire better standards of behavior through imitation and the natural desire to act like the group; in the beginning correct only what is absolutely necessary. For the rest, let it go.

Similarly, in the beginning a child should not be expected suddenly to change his eating habits. He may have come from a home where green vegetables were nonexistent. He may have been fed beer instead of milk. Perhaps in his family there was no such thing as everyone's sitting down together at table. Though he may look so undernourished that you yearn to feed him up, let him become accustomed in his stride to the unfamiliar foods and mealtime habits of the institution. Don't insist that he eat this or that; never fear, when he becomes hungry enough, he'll eat. Next, when he sees other children enjoying foods which at first he refused to touch, of his own accord he'll want to taste them, and soon he'll grow to like them too.

In short, the more gradually you allow a child to become used to life in the institution, the better he will adjust to it and to you in the long run. Each minute of patience and special effort to help him that you invest in a new child will pay dividends later in hours and days of responsiveness to you, in his contentment, and in the desirable kind of behavior that goes with these.

7 *When Behavior Creates Difficulties*

Other kinds of behavior make life difficult for house-mothers, for the group, and above all for the child who displays them. Among these are lying, stealing, spiteful or jealous actions, fighting, quarrelsomeness, and running away. How to deal with such behavior is one of your problems.

The pat answer "punishment" is no answer at all. Punishment usually defeats its own ends. When a child is spiteful, it increases rather than decreases his spitefulness. A sense of inferiority, at the root of much difficult behavior, is not cured by way of humiliation and punishment.

What's more, there are hazards for the adult who administers punishment. You are likely to get a false sense that now the problem is settled when actually it is as formidable as ever. A child smarting from his parents' ill-treatment may transfer to you his feelings of resentment against them. Nearly always punish-

ment is more an outlet for an adult's annoyance than a benefit to the child.

Group punishment, in which a whole group is penalized for the behavior of one or two of its members, usually fails to produce the desired results. It is a dangerous weapon, for the disapproval of the group may only aggravate the bitterness that caused the behavior in the first place. Also, group punishment, like the Nazi system of punishing whole villages because some inhabitant offended, engenders the group's hatred of the one who inflicts it.

Discipline has meaning only when it leads to self-discipline and its aim is to produce a change within a child. In group living, where certain kinds of behavior that might be tolerated in a family must be controlled, often children must be concretely made to realize the consequences of their actions. Housemothers' freedom to determine the type of discipline to be employed varies in different institutions.

If you have the option, avoid physical methods, and this does not mean only spanking; compelling children to sit, to stand facing the wall, or to toe the line for a period may be even crueler, with as little relation to the misdeed.

Should a child willfully destroy property, you may within reasonable limits make him pay for it. Should he have run away, upon his return see that he makes up the work missed during his absence. If he has a tan-

trum, put him in a comfortable room by himself, saying that, before he is ready to rejoin the group, he needs quietly to think over the behavior that made it unpleasant for others to be with him. As a rule, children understand and appreciate the fairness of such "taking the consequences" discipline.

When a youngster gets into mischief out of sheer exuberance of spirits or boredom—and there is no doubt that childish mischief can be very annoying—explain to him why his behavior hurts himself, or the group, or you; and if it is only occasional or incidental, your expressed disapproval will usually take care of the situation. If the behavior persists, you may find it helpful to discuss it with the social worker or the superintendent.

Face the fact that deep-rooted behavior can be brought under control and overcome only through long-run treatment that gets at its whys, only with profound understanding and great patience on your part, and perhaps with the help of the social worker. You may be sure that any child whose behavior presents problems to you is struggling with inner problems of his own.

Lying

Children, like adults, lie for various reasons. Some motives for lying are relatively easy to cope with and understand. A child who has experienced harsh and

unjust punishment and lies for fear of it will outgrow doing so if he learns that your kind of discipline is fair and fits the situation. A child who lies to gain an advantage should not get that advantage. Sometimes children lie to protect other children. In such cases let the child know you admire his loyalty, even though you must continue searching for the truth. Children's tattling is sometimes untruthful. Have your children realize that you are interested in their tales about other children only when it is absolutely necessary to protect the interests of the group.

Other kinds of lies have subtler causes and you can deal with them only slowly and indirectly. Much lying by children springs from the desire to get attention. Once a child feels secure and loved, this kind of lying is likely to end. Many children tell fantastic stories about the wealth or fame or beauty or distinction of their families to build themselves up in compensation for the bitter knowledge that those families amount to very little. Unless the child makes a habit of indulging in fantasy and so becomes less and less able to face realities, such lying may be ignored. With the slow gaining of the self-confidence and assurance you are working to bring about, a child's need to spin such yarns will end.

Be careful to distinguish between exaggeration and lying. Sometimes children exaggerate consciously for effect, just as adults do, and don't expect to be taken seriously.

Stealing

Motives for stealing are even more varied and complex than motives for lying, and no one treatment applies to all cases.

Some children, especially young ones, have absolutely no sense of property and don't realize what they are doing when they appropriate something that belongs to someone else. Teach such children property values.

This can best be done by giving them places in which to keep their own property and recognizing their right to have it. Also, they need money, in the form of either allowances or payment for work done, which is really theirs to spend. Through their use of it they learn how one acquires possessions and what they are worth.

Other boys and girls set too great store by property as their means of gaining prestige. Give such youngsters the opportunity to be important in more desirable ways. Also, make doubly sure that they have some money and possessions which are their very own.

When a child repeatedly steals out of sheer revenge, or spitefulness, or to get another child into trouble, he needs to reach the point where he is so happy and secure that he no longer feels the need to deprive other people.

As for the child who steals as a way of getting attention, see that he gets enough attention so that he won't want to attract it in such an unpleasant way.

Some boys and girls come to the institution from groups where it was considered smart, or where it was customary, to steal. Without long-winded moralizing, teach such youngsters the values and importance of honesty as a way of getting along comfortably in the world.

All children should be made to return whatever they have taken, but without a humiliating show and preferably without scolding. Explain that getting back what belongs to them is what they would want if something were stolen from them.

Running away

Almost anything from spring weather to terror can lead a child to run away. Many children run away even from happy homes just for adventure. Unhappiness, worry about their families, loneliness, homesickness, boredom, or defiance may be back of a child's running away from an institution. Perhaps when a child runs away, it would be well to question: "What is wrong with this institution, or with the way I treat him, that makes him want to leave us?" The solution to the problem of preventing repetitions of the offense may lie in the answer.

If you suspect a child is bored, see that he has a fuller and more varied program. If you feel that he has run away in defiance, find out what you can do to help him be less emotionally upset. If the running

away has something to do with his family, give him the promise of a visit home soon or try to have his parents' visits increased or outdo yourself to get news of his family to him.

To scold him or punish him amounts to nothing more than an effective way of making him want to run away again at the first opportunity!

Hostile actions, fighting, picking quarrels

Bullies, show-offs, and youngsters who are always picking quarrels because they feel they are picked on have in common a sense of insecurity. They are trying and disruptive in a group, and unfortunately there is no short-cut to improving their behavior. What you should do is gradually and consistently to build them up: give the bully a chance to shine in sports; give the whiny, quarrelsome little girl equal treatment with the others, maybe even a bit of extra attention until she is sure enough of herself to stop feeling aggrieved all the time.

But no matter how wisely you deal with an individual, you must never forget that you are also dealing with a group.

8 *The Group Has Its Advantages*

Granted that ideally all children ought to be living with their families, still yours aren't; and here they are, eight to perhaps thirty of them under your care, compelled to live in a group. Now the group is an influence and an identity over and above the mere sum total of the individuals who compose it, so it is heartening to realize that, properly utilized, it can be both a force in character building and a source of happiness for your children.

No one can give you a set of precepts that will enable you to make the most of the group under every circumstance that may arise, or for the benefit of each particular child. But if you keep in mind the principles of democratic government, you can't go very far wrong in your management of the group. Always remember that you are not a dictator, a Hitler who orders every thought and move, but one who governs in the American way with concern for the importance and rights of the individual as well as for the good of the majority.

Only if your children have the opportunity to exercise initiative and to have a voice in making decisions for the group, only if they learn to work and play cooperatively with one another, can they be good citizens of a community, now the Home, later the world. It is especially important for boys and girls who have run afoul of the law or social customs to get some understanding of self-government through experience. It is good for all children to serve on committees for parties or picnics or founders' day celebrations or beautifying the living room or hobbies or care of pets or many other activities, and you will be agreeably surprised by many wise decisions committees of children make.

Hold informal meetings for the purpose of making group decisions. For example, let your children vote on what form the evening's recreation should take. It is deadly when housemothers prescribe something like charades every Monday, singing every Wednesday, and table games every Friday. Similarly, when a party is in the offing, assemble the group to plan the favors and the food. The group might also set a few penalties for offenders against certain minor institutional rules. In one Home the youngsters decided that those who forgot to bring in their report cards to be signed would have to pay a fine; money thus collected was to be used, also in accordance with group vote, for Victrola records of the group's selection. You can discourage any fantastic schemes, impossible to carry out, by skillfully

directing discussion without ever seeming to make the final decisions.

Think up ways for your children to help one another with their dressing, their chores, their studying, or whatnot, and to engage in work and play projects for common ends, with the object of fostering a sense of group responsibility, a one-for-all-and-all-for-one attitude. For some children, the oversensitive and the unsure, the sense of being part of a group in which they have interest and pride can be a kind of fortification against the hurts of the world. It is as if they were members of a team instead of solo players, not deprived of the joys of their team's winning but spared the anguish of individual, personal responsibility for losing.

Be on guard against any of your children's being lost in the group. Some, the natural-born leaders, the highly talented, or the brilliant, will find their own niches. They should have their chance to shine, of course, but not at the expense of others who will need special help from you to make them noticed. In terms of being the best kind of housemother, it is usually more important to help a child with no self-confidence make a place for himself in the group than it is to tone down a noisy or obstreperous one. His only special ability may be pitifully small, perhaps little more than the know-how to set the table or to whistle in tune, but whatever it is, see that he has the chance to use it for the rest of the group's enjoyment. By contributing to

their pleasure or comfort, he will get recognition from the other children and a feeling of self-satisfaction. The best way to discourage rivalries within the group, you will find, whether they be based on something as flattering as a place in your affection or as disrupting as prowess in blackening eyes, is for each child to have a sense of achievement that builds him up without his feeling the necessity of tearing down somebody else.

Frequently, for little or no apparent reason, a group of children "gangs up" or "picks" on some one unfortunate child. It is not easy for any adult to combat such group tendencies, but they must be checked. Youngsters who feel that they are unjustly treated often develop the desire to "get even" and may grow up to become anything from outright criminals to ne'er-do-wells with a "world-owes-me-a-living" attitude. At the very least, the boy or girl made a scapegoat, the butt of continual teasing, suffers more than any youngster ought to have to bear. With adolescents especially group approval or disapproval is a powerful force; in or out of institutions, teen-agers crave to be like and liked by "the gang."

A quiet talk with the others may help to straighten out this kind of situation, and if you can enlist one or two well-liked children to act as the scapegoat's special champions, you will find them valuable allies. Little by little, if and as you feel that your attempt to establish him with the group is meeting with some suc-

cess, ask other children to help him in one way or another.

But by and large, your most effective means of combatting group disapproval is your own example. He and the rest of the group must feel that you, at least, do not wholly disapprove of him. It is a rare child in whom you cannot find something to like! Disapproval is infectious and never by attitude, word, or deed should you let the group suspect that you dislike any of its members. Avoid public criticism of the victimized child's shortcomings and foibles, praise his achievements, ask him to give you a hand with little chores, while at the same time you are careful not to add fuel to the fire of his unpopularity by overdoing matters to the point of letting the others regard him as your special pet. There is no guarantee that even your best efforts to give him a secure place in the group will succeed, but to make his life tolerable now, and his future unhandicapped by bitter memories of childhood experiences, you must, at least, try.

You should also do your utmost to fit each of your children into the group so that he gets his proportionate benefit from group experience. Recognize that children differ in personality and temperament just as they do in ability, and the rough must not override the gentle nor the ones who bid for attention obscure those who shrink back. The best housemothers guide their groups so that the various children in them, like

the various instruments in an orchestra, all have a part in contributing to a harmonious whole.

Designed for harmony and happiness, too, should be the group's physical background, which is maintained through housekeeping.

9 *Neatness Can Be Overdone*

In a Home, as in a home, good housekeeping should never be an end in itself. Clean and orderly surroundings are merely a means of making group living pleasant. Perhaps you know the play *Craig's Wife* which portrayed a fanatically neat woman who placed the appearance of her home above the comfort of the people who lived in it, and so made her husband's life miserable. Too many children suffer similarly from housemothers who are Craig's wives and give more importance to the polish on the floors and the angles at which washcloths are folded than to children's needs and right to be children, which include stirring up a bit of mess!

No one is born with a sense of tidiness as he is with an appetite; children have to learn from adults to be orderly. Of course, youngsters cannot be allowed to let their bureau drawers remain like rats' nests indefinitely, nor to leave their clothing lying on the floor at night, nor continually to disarrange furniture

without ever putting it back into place. But there is a happy medium between unchecked childish disorder and the cold precision and spotlessness that can be achieved only when children are rigorously kept from being themselves.

Many of your children will have come from homes whose housekeeping standards fall far below yours. Be patient with boys and girls who have never before known what it is to make beds neatly or to have special places for their toilet articles or to sweep under the furniture. It is as hard for them to change their habits as it would be for you to change yours if you suddenly moved to a foreign country.

Instead of enforcing tidiness, use the slower but surer way of helping your children to see its comforts and advantages. Give them reasons rather than rules for being neat. For instance, point out that if belongings are put away they will be safe and right there when you want them, or that if toys are left lying out on the floor someone might trip over them and hurt himself. Convenience and consideration for others are, after all, the basic reasons for keeping things in order, and once your children have grasped this, tidiness is likely to result. Demand it only to the degree to which it is desirable habit training for them, never with the idea of making a show of your good housekeeping for your superintendent or board members.

If insistence upon exaggerated neatness comes from your superiors, you are somewhat, but not wholly,

hamstrung. For your children's sake, try to influence the management to give you more leeway in letting them romp and use at least some part of the building freely. Some children very much need to be able to indulge in rough play; it is an excellent outlet for feelings of bitterness that might otherwise come out in actions directed against other children and adults, among whom would be you. And no child should have to remove his shoes when he comes indoors, or be forbidden to enter by the front door for no better reason than that he might track mud on the hall floor; nor should parlors or board rooms stand unused and immaculate except for special occasions while your children lack sufficient indoor play space. In short, you ought to work for using your cottage or building instead of saving it.

Some housemothers, independent of institutional policy, suppress children through their own over-particular housekeeping because, though conscientious enough, they have so false an understanding of their work they think they do their duty best by serving things rather than humans. They do not realize that the best evidence of a housemother's job well done is happy, spirited children. They mistakenly get their satisfaction and sense of achievement from such things as spotless rooms and orderly closets, regardless of the fact that their children are crushed, regimented, and denied homelike freedom in the constant effort to maintain the premises just so.

The best institutions for children have only as clean and orderly a look as the average nicely kept home not occupied solely by adults. In such a home wainscotings are likely to show scuff marks, pillows are not always plumped, occasionally toys and dolls lie about, and at times the floors show small, muddy footprints. Inferior institutions for children, spotless, shining, and always in apple-pie order, bear more resemblance to barracks or hospital wards than to places where children have the chance to be gay and happy—indeed, even to be children! Where no toys are in sight, you may be sure they may not be freely used.

A good mother is a good mother first and a good housekeeper second. A good housemother also puts her housekeeping second to her children's fun and opportunity to develop naturally. Remember always that the building in which you work and its furniture exist for your children, not the children for the furniture and building.

The same is true of clothing.

IO *It Matters What They Wear*

No women, and few men, need to be told that clothing is more than a means of keeping warm. Good, attractive, well-fitting clothes set you up, give you pleasure, and bolster your self-confidence.

Children, especially those over ten, are no different from adults in this respect. Even boys, though less definitely clothes-conscious than girls, suffer when they don't have the right kind of clothing and gain in assurance when they do.

In your institution housemothers may not have a voice in the selection of their children's wardrobes, but whether or not you do the actual purchasing, you should at least recognize the emotional importance of clothing and do everything you can to help your children to be happily and suitably dressed. Remember that what they wear is not only something to cover their nakedness but also a way of expressing their personalities, of making them feel attractive.

Suitable clothing for dependent children is exactly

the same as suitable clothing for all other children. It is essential that your children be dressed in the same way as their classmates at school or they will be marked as "Homies" as surely as if they were branded. If they must wear donated suits and dresses, see that at least these are well repaired, the proper sizes and lengths, and not out of date.

Only when a child asks especially for a certain garment which has belonged to another child is it desirable to pass on any clothing, with the exception of underwear and stockings, that has either been outgrown or left behind by some youngster who has left the institution. Even in families it often gripes younger brothers to be compelled to wear hand-me-downs, and for dependent children the practice is even more painful and humiliating.

So far as it is possible, let them select their own clothing, whether it be from the institution's central storeroom or, much better, right from the shops. Children's tastes, like grown-ups', differ, and certainly you would get little comfort or pleasure from your own wardrobe if someone else selected every bit of it. Taking your children downtown to shop is much more than a chore or a jaunt; actually it is part of your work of helping them to grow up. Even eight and nine-year-olds ought to buy their own ties or ribbons, while from twelve years up the experience of assembling a wardrobe is valuable training in that important practical aspect of life, making purchases. Though your guid-

ance will be helpful when your children make and budget their selections, it is far better to let them make occasional mistakes, should they balk at your suggestions, than it is to be a wardrobe dictator. Clothes purchases give them about their only chance to learn, through trial and error, how to buy; under institutional conditions, practically everything is supplied and there is no running errands to the corner grocery for Mother.

Humor children's clothing quirks and preferences whenever you can. They may be getting great satisfaction from identifying themselves with some ideal; a boy may revel in a cowboy suit or a girl in sweaters like Lana Turner's, or a teen-ager may want to duplicate your blouse or hair-do. It does no harm to indulge such notions, while it is often downright cruel, a pointless deprivation, arbitrarily to quash them.

If a child clings to some article of clothing he brought with him to the institution, clean it up, mend it, and let him wear it as long as he wishes. Remember that, though it may be only a disreputable rag to you, to him it is a precious link with home. Likewise when a mother or other relative sends a dress, no matter how shoddy or in poor taste it be in your opinion, let a little girl wear it if she prefers it to all the pretty things from which she has to choose.

The more your children like their clothing, the better care of it they are likely to take. But a good idea to bear in mind is that children's clothing should be

clean when they put it on and dirty when they take it off, and you must also expect your share of scuffs and tears and rips and of lost shoes, stockings, and gloves.

Some clothing should be for play and some for occasions when it will get less wear and tear. But children's lives should not be made miserable with continually dressing and undressing. Only the same number and kind of clothing changes during the day that are sensible in a home are equally sensible in a Home.

More effective than laying down rules, and better habit training, is to explain and help your children to see the logical reasons for putting their clothes away properly "so they are unwrinkled when you put them on; so you know where to find them when you next want them; so you get your own and not someone else's dress or suit from the closet." It is, however, a mistake to demand perfect tidiness of dresser drawers. Few adults and almost no children have theirs in perpetual apple-pie order, so six days a week close your eyes a little, and one day weekly have a grand tidying-up. Should anything be thrown away during this cleaning and sorting, it ought to be only by a child's own decision. Remember that what seems useless junk to you may be a treasure to him.

Your own part in keeping up your children's self-respect through proper clothing is, for one thing, to keep it in good repair; rips and tears and garments hanging by a safety pin are not conducive to the comfortable sense of being well dressed. For another,

make sure that everything is labelled with a child's name or initials so that he gets his own and not someone else's clothing when it comes out of the laundry. Your institution probably has definite rules about frequency of changing underwear and night garments. If not, your own good sense and standards of cleanliness will determine when fresh ones are necessary.

Naturally clothing should be suitable for the weather and large enough so that feet don't become misshapen from tight shoes or any part of the body constricted or irritated. Be sure no boy's trousers and no girl's panties are worn when they are outgrown. Clothing is important not only for emotional well-being but also for physical health.

II *Good Habits and Good Health*

Healthy bodies and minds require good habits of eating, personal hygiene, and sleeping. Sheer institutional routine, which assures regular mealtimes and bedtimes and a certain amount of personal cleanliness, gives you an excellent foundation upon which to build your children's physical and emotional health. But like everything else in child care, conforming to regulations is not enough.

Eating

The circumstances under which your children have their meals have a great deal to do not only with their happiness and manners but also with their health. Mealtimes should be occasions of pleasure and sociability, for enjoyment while eating aids digestion.

Talking at the table is natural and should be allowed, indeed encouraged. If you eat with your children, lead the conversation and help to carry it on. Get

them to chat freely about what they are doing, or making, or studying, as they would at a family table. Stimulate discussions of current events, and what took place in school, and plans for parties. Like a good hostess, see that everyone has his chance to talk.

Continual scolding and urging children to eat only serve to make them dislike food. Don't make children eat everything on their plates. Often smaller portions induce children to eat. When a child refuses certain foods, the less to-do the better. Some children have an aversion to particular foods or are allergic to them; better check with the doctor persistent refusal to eat this or that. Remember, too, that children's appetites undergo fluctuations, so you need not be concerned when a child seems temporarily to be eating less than before as long as he gains weight on a balanced diet not overladen with starches. On the whole, however, you will find less trouble about getting children to eat in a Home than there often is in a home, where youngsters use refusing to eat as a way of attracting their mothers' attention.

Since children are imitative in their food habits, avoid talking about your own food dislikes or what disagrees with you; always act as if you were enjoying your food. Except for drinking tea and coffee, refrain from taking anything before your children that is not served to them, too. Not only is it downright cruel to make youngsters watch an adult enjoying delicacies

denied to them, but also unless you eat the same food as they do, you cannot really know what they are experiencing in the way of meals.

Correct table manners unobtrusively, never letting it seem that a child is singled out for criticism. The constant example of your own good table manners will go further than a deal of lecturing. The other, and equally undesirable, extreme of continually picking on table manners is to let children wolf their food without any supervision. In some institutions if there is not an adult sitting at each table, an adolescent boy or girl presides at each table of younger children. Each child should have a napkin and be taught to use it; this is a nicety too often neglected in institutions.

Though both the dawdler and the gobbler present problems at table, usually they can improve their timing in eating through the example of their table mates without constant reminders from you. To compel all children to remain seated until everyone at every table in the dining room has finished and to march in and out of the dining room makes mealtimes seem more like prison routines than the occasions for good times they should be.

Try to make your table as pretty as possible, with plants to decorate it, or fresh flowers or autumn leaves in season. An attractive dining room is also a stimulus to appetite; if the one in your institution is dreary, see what you can do to brighten it.

While indiscriminate eating between meals is of

course undesirable, snacks are good for growing boys and girls. Peanut butter, milk, fruit, and plain cookies make wholesome between-meals treats. Some institutions permit older boys and girls, who may have had supper at five and do not go to bed until nine-thirty, to go to the icebox for milk during the evening.

Drinking

Most children do not drink enough water, and you should remind them to do it. If your institution lacks a sufficient number of drinking fountains to make water easily and obviously available, each child should have an individual cup labelled with his name.

Children ought to have water with their meals so long as it does not interfere with their drinking milk.

Lighting

Make sure that whenever your children use their eyes, as for reading or sewing, they are in good light. To whatever degree you can control lighting, do so. Sometimes all the difference between proper and improper lighting lies in the size of the bulbs used or in the removal of heavy draperies from windows.

Personal hygiene

Make a bath schedule for your children, with daily baths in hot weather. At the very least, children should

wash their feet before going to bed. Older children ought to be allowed to bathe as often as they please.

Some children will need checking after their baths to be sure they have washed all parts of their bodies. Occasionally examine scalps, ears, eyes, noses, sex organs, and nails. Just as in a family older brothers and sisters help with the care of younger ones, so if you can find suitable older children, carefully selected for their personalities and sense of responsibility, they might take over some of this task for you.

Teach your children to brush their teeth and wash their faces night and morning. Establish habits of hand-washing night and morning, before each meal, and after going to the toilet.

Shampoo girls' hair weekly. If a child comes into the institution with hair vermin-infested, his hair should not be cut so that he is made conspicuous; the condition should be treated. Ask the nurse or doctor to instruct you in the use of the remedial solution she or he recommends. Examine all children's scalps regularly for nits (lice eggs).

Cut finger and toe nails, or see that they are cut, weekly.

Keep a record of your girls' menstruation, for young girls are likely to be very irregular. Unless the doctor orders otherwise, have them bathe as usual and engage in their usual activities during their menstrual periods. Don't believe old wives' tales about the danger of getting wet or exercising at this time of the month.

If a child has a cold, provide him with plenty of handkerchief tissues. More than ever, make certain that he drinks water abundantly, and fruit juices too. If possible, isolate children who have colds.

See that young children establish regular habits of bowel elimination before they go to school. Never give a laxative. If a child has gone two days without eliminating, report the fact to the doctor or nurse.

First aid and reports

The following also ought to be reported to the superintendent, doctor, or nurse:

Temperature over 98.8 degrees

Rashes

Appetite that lags for days

Fainting

Vomiting

Convulsions

Severe nosebleed

Toothache

Persistent complaints of pain. (If a child is just bidding for attention, this a good way to stop it.)

Do not depend upon your own conviction that it's nothing serious. With children, even more than with adults, you never can tell. A complaint of a stomach ache on a Monday morning may be a way of getting out of going to school, but it also may be appendicitis!

Ventilation

All windows in an institution for children should have ventilators that permit fresh air to enter the room without creating drafts. If your institution lacks these, improvise substitutes by spreading cloths or blankets over the foot or head of the beds of any children exposed to drafts.

Some rooms do not have enough windows; some have too many; but aim for a daytime room temperature of 68. At night rooms may be colder. Open windows from the top at night.

Air beds at least half an hour daily.

Sleeping and resting

When children do not get enough sleep, they tend to be irritable and not well nourished. The amount of sleep necessary for children ranges from twelve to eight hours, depending on their age and the state of their health.

Younger children should have only quiet play before bedtime.

If any of your children have night terrors or walk in their sleep, report this to the doctor.

Never make bed-wetting (enuresis) a reason for making a child conspicuous or for punishing him. Its cause cannot be removed by shaming or scolding or segregating or making a child wash out his sheets. Although physical causes of enuresis are much rarer than

many people think, report bed-wetting to the doctor. With some children, enuresis may be simply the result of poor habit training before they came to the institution. Nearly always, however, it is, like nail-biting, a symptom of emotional disturbance and disappears in time with the slow gaining of inner assurance. In the meanwhile, make sure that a child who wets his bed urinates immediately before retiring. Try to ascertain at about what time during the night he wets and if possible awaken him gently before that time is reached and have him go to the bathroom; otherwise do so about midnight. See that he is sufficiently awake to know what he is doing and why without brusquely starting him from sleep. No matter how much work it entails, always give a bed-wetter a dry, comfortable bed before he goes back to sleep.

All children should have some period for rest during the afternoon. How long should be specified by the doctor.

If, by rising a little earlier yourself, you can attend to some chores and let your children get all the sleep they need, you will be doing them a real service. The work children perform in institutions has hazards as well as benefits.

I2 *When Your Children Work*

Children are not interested in work, and work for work's sake has little meaning to them. Some kinds of work, however, help them to develop better characters and personalities.

You can apply a very simple test to determine whether the work your children do has value for them. Ask yourself, "Is its primary object to get the work done so that the cost of running the institution is lessened, or is it to give them a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment, to teach them useful skills, and to develop in them that system and orderliness which is part of a sense of responsibility?"

Obviously, if "yes" is the answer to the first part of this question, your children's needs come second to the work's; not, as it should be, the work's to your children's. Too often executives of children's institutions boast of the economies effected by their huge farms and gardens, and the vast quantities of fruit and vegetables canned by the children, without figuring

the cost in tired little bodies and minds dulled by endless hoeing, picking, and peeling. Similarly, the way children are often made to toil at certain kinds of monotonous cleaning such as floor polishing and sidewalk sweeping and dishwashing may be just cheap labor behind a prettified false front that it is "good for them."

The only kind of work really good for children is work that has meaning for them, not work in which they cannot see the forest of long-time results for the trees of daily drudgery. Unlike adults, children do not easily relate the present with the past and the future, and therefore the canned tomatoes which appear on the table in January have little connection with the planting the spring before. Nor are boys and girls sustained in the labors of cultivating long rows by envisioning the peas they will eat the following winter.

Another justification often given for working dependent children like field hands is that it is healthful to work in the open air. Older children can often work hard without detriment, but age is not the only criterion. Growing children are quickly fatigued and individual strength and endurance must also be considered. Young children have a short attention span, which is taxed by monotonous work of which they grasp neither beginning nor end; they do not have a sense of the huge and protracted whole. For open-air work, it is better for your children to care for a tiny garden that is all their own than to have a small share

in the tending of acres. Tie up the whole process of making things grow, from planting to harvesting, with their nature study, their home economics, creating their interest in what is here and now as the seasons go along. So directed, their outdoor work will be truly healthful mentally as well as physically.

Follow the same principle of giving your children a sense of the job as a whole in work about the house instead of using assembly-line methods. For instance, if a little girl tears her dress and mends it, that is desirable work. She sees cause and effect, she understands what she is doing and why, she has a personal interest in her task. But if she is given the stint of darning a pile of stockings, that is undesirable work. She doesn't know whose they are and the whole business has very little meaning to her. What's more, if she does a good job of it very probably the next time she is assigned to the sewing room she will have another batch of stockings to darn. Or take the matter of setting the table. Rather than assigning Johnny to place all the silver, Mary the glasses, and Robert the napkins, make Johnny and Mary and Robert each responsible for setting a table completely. This method may be less efficient in terms of speedy table-setting, but it is infinitely better in the more important terms of what the children get out of their work. Remember always that your aim is not so much to make their work efficient as to make it meaningful.

As a matter of fact, you cannot ever expect children

to work as efficiently as adults, so be careful not to hold them up to standards of perfection. Little by little, with practice and as they grow older, their performance should improve, but at every point in their development your comparison of any child's work should be with what he was able to do before, never with an absolute standard. See that each child's tasks are graded and varied, always taking into consideration his own individual abilities and interests so that he progresses in skills. That Mary is expert at polishing the glasses, or Joe does an especially good job sweeping, is no reason to keep them polishing glasses and sweeping until doomsday.

Make use of the values of the group in planning and assigning necessary work. Talk over what has to be done with your children, then let them help to decide who is going to do what. Encourage volunteering rather than arbitrarily assign chores. In many institutions children help in drawing up the weekly schedule of tasks and their choices are given as much consideration as possible. If youngsters want to exchange services ("I'll do your darning today if you'll set the table for me"), let them do it.

Build up the feeling that everyone is working together for common ends. It comes naturally in a happy home where the children have a sense of sharing in all that is the family's and the mother makes their services part of a scheme that works for everyone's benefit, but in an institution it has to be deliberately created.

Your children will respond better to your giving them the sense of "this is ours to keep up" than to the feeling "I must work in exchange for all I'm given here." They can get genuine pleasure from participating in work that contributes to the comfort and welfare of their cottage and dormitory group.

Learning to find pleasure in work is important lest a lifelong distaste for work be acquired. Never use work as a threat or a punishment, nor as a means of playing favorites. Make it pleasant whenever possible; for instance, encourage singing or let the children choose their partners on the job. Avoid giving a child a distaste for work by taking what he does for granted: give it recognition to build up that pleasurable sense of personal achievement so gratifying to all of us and doubly so to the emotionally insecure children in institutions.

This same recognition of work accomplished is also important for giving children a feeling for the dignity of work. You can give them this understanding, not by making speeches on the subject, but by the example of your own attitude towards drudgery. Perform your share of it cheerfully; praise and show your respect for theirs. Some of your boys and girls may be ashamed or contemptuous of menial work done by their parents. If you can help them to realize that all necessary work is worthy, you relieve them of an emotional burden now and set their thinking straight

for menial work they may themselves have to do in the future.

Watch carefully for signs of fatigue in working children. Youngsters' energy is very deceptive, and because they seem to play tirelessly does not mean they can work tirelessly. Their interest in the work as well as their physical stamina determine how long they can stick at a job without becoming worn out.

Schedule work so that it does not conflict with time set apart for rest, play, or study hour, if there is one. If it is absolutely unavoidable that worktime cut into playtime, such as work that can be done only immediately before meals and necessitates the kitchen detail's leaving the playground ahead of the others, make sure that some of this lost playtime is made up at some other time. For the right kind of play, like the right kind of work, is necessary to a child's fullest development.

13 *When Your Children Play*

Play is more than a means of filling idle hours; for a child it is as vital to self-fulfillment as work is to an adult. It is physically healthful and aids co-ordination. Through play children are able to express themselves as they cannot in words, and so get rid of pent-up emotions. Individual play often gives a child a sense of personal accomplishment; team play helps him to be a good loser as well as a winner and is part of training in group life.

As a rule, underplaying is not so common a wrong of institutional life as overworking, so it will probably not be necessary for you to see that your children get enough play. Do, however, see that they get the right kind of play.

This means the right kind for each individual child, that is, individualized play. Team play, for example, though usually highly desirable, should be experienced a bit at a time by some children as for them it may intensify feelings of inferiority.

The best kind of play or recreation helps to develop a balanced personality. For instance, a youngster who is inclined to go off in a corner by himself needs to learn to play with others. The show-off, the blusterer, on the other hand, benefits by reading, by listening to music, by collecting, and by other quiet, solitary pursuits. This does not mean that boys and girls should be forced into forms of recreation that go against their natures—it is the very essence of play that it be voluntary—but that you should create opportunities and give encouragement for pursuits they would be inclined to by-pass if left entirely to themselves. Unless there is a team, a dramatic group, or a game of parchesi, for example, your unsociable youngster is likely to do nothing but stick by himself. Unless books are called to his attention, records are there to be played, or places provided to house collections, your always-in-the-foreground “good mixer” will continue to get his recreation exclusively with a crowd and never learn to enjoy his own company.

Since institutional living tends to quash resourcefulness or to fail to give it the chance to develop, be sure that every minute of your children’s leisure time isn’t planned for group play. Every youngster ought to have some time for free play when he can do what he pleases and as far as possible where he pleases. It is good to allow for times when a child can be all by himself wherever in the buildings and grounds he wishes to be.

Sometimes play along with your children as a mother does. This is a fine way of getting really close to them. Avoid, however, dominating the play; just be one of them.

Let your children play under as few restrictions as possible. If they have to be careful about scuffing their shoes or the furniture, much of the tension-reducing value of play will be lost. Playthings and toys are for use, not for show; they should be easy to get at and freely enjoyed.

Encourage your children to make their own toys. Not only are handicrafts in themselves an excellent form of play, but also children are likely to take better care of playthings if they have put effort and interest into their creation.

Much of children's play comes spontaneously, but much also should be planned and provided. You will find many detailed ideas for play in Jeanne H. Barnes' *Young Folks in Homes*, published by the National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York, N.Y. Roughly, among the kinds of recreation suitable for children are: sports; story-telling; table games; caring for pets; handicrafts, from scrapbook making for younger children through dressing dolls all the way up to making hangings, rugs, pottery, bird houses, or even boats for older children; collecting; reading; music, both active singing or playing of a musical instrument and passive listening; dramatic play, whether it be so simple and informal as charades

or so organized as giving a play with the children making the scenery and costumes as well as acting in it; and parties.

In too many institutions social life, especially for the adolescents, is rigidly restricted to one sex. Have boys and girls go to the movies together, dance, picnic, and do whatever else teen-agers outside of institutions usually enjoy in mixed groups. Unnatural segregation tends to arouse girls' morbid curiosity about boys, or vice versa, and prevents that wholesome attitude towards sex which you must help to bring about.

I4 *About Matters of Sex*

Interest in sex is a perfectly natural and normal part of growing up physically and emotionally, and it should not be hush-hushed or repressed. This is the keynote of your dealings with matters of sex, whether they show up in questioning or behavior.

When a child asks his first question about sex—probably “Where do babies come from?”—answer simply and directly something like “from the mother’s body.” If you turn off his question you are stunting his mental and emotional development as you would never dream of stunting him physically. Should he make his inquiry at a time when it is difficult or impossible to answer it, say, “I’ll tell you later when we can be together,” and then be sure to create the opportunity to bring him around to repeating it. It is not necessary, however, to go into a lengthy explanation of the whole birth process. Children do not have the urge to be told everything all at once; their curiosity about sex grows as they grow. Answer the next ques-

tion—very likely “How does the baby get out?”—only when it is asked.

Sometimes adults read into children's minds things that exist only in their own. Usually children ask about sex with no more emotion or sense of indecency than they would ask about anything else, such as “What makes an automobile go?” So whatever your own upbringing, attitudes, or experience in regard to sexual matters, never let a child feel that you are in the slightest degree shocked or embarrassed by his questions. On the contrary, you should welcome your children's coming to you for information and be pleased by it. It is what they would do with their own mothers.

When a child's questions about sex are answered simply and honestly, it is normal for him to give the matter little further thought until the subject of the next inquiry occurs to him. If his questions are preceded or followed by prolonged disturbance or moodiness, you had better consult the social worker, psychiatrist, or superintendent.

Always use the correct physiological terms in speaking to children: penis, testicles, vulva, vagina, uterus, breasts. In regard to menstruation terminology this is particularly important. Girls should not think of themselves as being “sick” or “unwell” or “having the curse,” but as undergoing a normal physiological process like breathing; much painful menstruation and many gynecological troubles in later life result

from wrong thinking and wrong wording during girlhood. Be sure all girls as they approach the age of puberty are well informed about menstruation lest they be terrified at its onset. They should know just what happens and why: that an egg passes monthly from the ovary to the uterus and goes out with the extra supply of blood that would have gone to nourish it had it been fertilized. Boys, too, should be prepared in advance for the bodily changes and nocturnal emissions of seminal fluid during sleep they may expect at puberty. Older boys and girls should be informed about the physiology of the other sex as well as their own. If all questions about sex have been answered as and when they have come up, the giving and taking of this information come easily. You will find such books as *Being Born* by Frances B. Strain, Appleton-Century; *Growing Up* by Karl de Schweinitz, Macmillan; and *The Wonder of Life* by Milton I. Levine, M.D., and Jean T. Seligmann, Simon and Schuster, helpful in answering children's questions.

The natural development of sex curiosity brings about not only questioning but also behavior that seems shocking unless its normal basis is understood. When little children peer at one another's bodies, or exhibit themselves, or finger each other, they are not being "nasty" or "dirty"; this is their way of exploring and experimenting. Unless such behavior is excessive, overlook it as a passing phase.

"Crushes," especially among girls, are also normal

at a certain stage of growing up and are common in institutions and boarding schools where there is no family affection to absorb much of the craving to give and get love. Crushes ought not be derided. If the crush is on you, you can partially divert it by seeing that the youngster who overadores you has other interests and plenty of activity.

Ample opportunity to associate with the opposite sex should not be ruled out on the ground that it may lead to "necking." It is not uncommon for young women to become unmarried mothers within a year or two after leaving institutions because, unaccustomed to the company of boys, they succumb to the first male who pays any attention to them.

Generally by the age of six children have developed some sense of modesty with the opposite sex. Should any of your boys or girls violate the proprieties unduly, appeal to them on social, not moral grounds. Explain that this is simply not the way people behave. Never use shame as an argument.

Deal with obscene writing also in the category of its being socially objectionable rather than wicked. Many a small boy doesn't even understand the meaning of the four-letter words he scribbles on the lavatory wall; he may be merely copying the older boys or acting under their orders. When a child does thoroughly understand what he is writing, there must be a reason for his expressing himself in this particular way; all is not as it should be in his attitude towards sex. Here

again you may need help from the psychiatrist or social worker in getting at the root of the matter and thus stopping the objectionable behavior far more effectively than by any scolding or punishment or vigilance. Such measures, indeed, may only serve to increase the desire to write more and dirtier words!

The problem of occasional masturbation (playing with the sex organs) must also be approached fundamentally, not by way of external pressure. Segregation, punishment, or shaming are no help at all in curbing it. Despite the folklore that has grown up around the subject, it is not harmful in itself (except in very rare cases of infection) and is the result of psychological problems, not the cause of them. Look upon masturbation not as something sinful or dangerous but as a symptom of a vague unhappiness which a child is unable to express in words, and get expert help in determining his emotional difficulties so that you can help to solve them by giving him more wholesome satisfactions. For a child who masturbates, some healthfully firing activity is also excellent. Don't worry too much about the bad influence of masturbation on other children in the dormitory. The less fuss you make, the less attention they'll be likely to pay to it.

Sometimes the cause of masturbation is simple and easily remedied. It may be physical. Report masturbation to the nurse or doctor so that he or she may decide whether local treatment is needed. Or tight underwear or trousers may be causing irritation. The obvious

remedy here is properly fitting clothing. Check continually to make sure that trousers or panties have not become outgrown.

If the habit has acquired a real hold on an older child, explain to him why it is undesirable; not that he's going to "go crazy" because of it, which isn't true, but that it tends to encourage and is encouraged by being alone, and that like any other uncontrolled habit it is inadvisable if for no other reason than that it is a habit. Getting control over one's behavior is part of growing up, and masturbation, like temper tantrums, may be unsuitable for a fourteen-year-old as may not be the case with a four-year-old.

Should you suspect outright homosexual practice between any of your children, as occasionally happens, especially between older boys or girls, take up the matter with the psychiatrist or social worker. Homosexuality is only one of the more striking hazards of segregation in an institution. There are others that are less apparent, but subtly and almost surely they unfit children for well-rounded normal life in the future unless they are recognized and overcome.

15 *Your Children Must Live in the World*

Even the finest, best staffed institution with first-class educational and recreational facilities and an unlimited endowment could not by itself give its children all they need in the way of preparation for life. Like homes, Homes must be linked with the world outside their walls or the children in them cannot develop normally. When an institution is run as if it were an isolated island, its inhabitants meet only the adults who care for them and children whose way of life is identical with their own. They grow up a group apart, limited in outlook and ignorant even of such elementary, practical, everyday matters as how to board a bus, how to make change, and how to mingle with strangers in a crowd.

Your children won't always be living in an institution and they need the experiences afforded by the community. True, to provide them is more trouble than it is to coop up children mentally and physically. But just as a real mother lets her sons and daughters

go out, and invites neighbors' youngsters over though it might make life simpler for her to keep her family by itself in its own backyard, so you should give your children, who are already constricted by having to live in an institution, a variety of opportunities for outside contacts, experiences, and activities.

Fortunately nowadays the trend is for schooling off the premises in the regular community schools. You can help your children to share fruitfully in life outside by using the school contact to the fullest possible extent. Encourage your boys and girls to take part in extra-curricular activities such as teams and dramatics and the local youth organizations, even though it means that, when practice or rehearsals or meetings delay them, you may have to dish up supper for them after the others have finished. Do your best to attend games and performances in which they participate to show your interest in their activities. It's all part of being in place of Mother.

Like Mother, too, join the Parent-Teachers' Association and attend its meetings. If in your institution it is not the case worker's job to know your children's teachers, by all means make it yours. Talk over your children with their teachers as real mothers do. Find out, for instance, whether Johnny should be helped with his homework or whether it is better for him to work it through unaided, and how Susie is doing now in arithmetic. You will find it helpful to discuss with teachers the best ways of dealing with individual chil-

dren's problems you both recognize. Too often "the children from the Home" are given scant attention by teachers because no one displays any personal interest in them. By making the same kind of contacts at school and follow-ups of reports a real mother makes, you will create in teachers respect for yourself and your children and stimulate them to give individual attention.

Also use the school as a means of encouraging your children to develop outside friendships. If classmates invite them to their homes, allow them to go even though you may be put to the trouble of making special arrangements or of upsetting schedules for the occasion. .

See that your children are hosts as well as guests. Suggest that they bring in their school friends to play on the institution grounds. If possible have them feel free to have company for meals. Of course this cannot be done quite so casually and easily in an institution as it can in a home, but if you make it clear that invitations for dinner or supper may be extended only in accordance with rules, that you must be notified in advance about guests, any little inconvenience to you should be more than outweighed by the joys and benefits for your children. Not only is being able to have company for meals an inseparable part of feeling really at home, but also, for children so much and so constantly on the receiving end, it is doubly blessed to give.

At first you may find some boys and girls too embarrassed at living in an institution to want to invite school friends to visit them there. But one indication of your success at being in place of Mother will be your children's pleasure and pride in the Home and and a growing desire to show it off. Use its assets as a means of bringing in neighborhood children. Invite them to use the playground equipment, to be part of the audience at movies in your auditorium, to see the Christmas tree, probably larger than any they have in their own homes. Have open house on special occasions such as Christmas; stage tea parties. At such parties it is an excellent idea to have your children make favors for their guests and themselves.

With its large rooms the institution is likely to be a good meeting place for groups like the local Boy Scout or Girl Scout troops or the Junior Red Cross. Capitalize upon all your facilities, in short, to bring the youngsters of the community in to yours, as well as letting yours go out among them.

Just as you use the school for social contacts, use the church too. Encourage your children to join church societies for young people and to visit the homes of the boys and girls they meet through them. But much benefit will be undone if you insist on making your children sit in church all herded together so that they are conspicuously marked as "from the Home." Allow them to sit where they please and with whom. Any anxiety you may suffer as to their possible misbe-

havior, quickly spotted and easy to prevent a second time, is a small price to pay for what you give them: the sense of being part of the world at large instead of a different, recognizable group.

Making the arrangements for transportation to school or church may be outside your hands, but if you have anything to say about it, by all means see that your children use public transportation like everybody else. To send them everywhere in the institution's bus or station wagon is just one more needless way of marking them and shutting them off from the main stream of ordinary community life.

Should your institution permit children to go out alone, encourage them to do it with your blessing. Teen-agers, above all, should not always have to go about with a housemother tagging at their heels.

If you have some responsibility for purchasing clothing or household supplies, take boys and girls along on your shopping expeditions. It is a part of normal childhood experience to go to stores with Mother, to roam about that juvenile paradise, the five-and-ten, and to buy occasional ice cream cones or sodas.

Its stores are only one of your community's resources for giving your children broader experiences than they can have within the institution. No matter how excellent the institution's library, let them get books from the public library, too. Take them to local museums; find out whenever an interesting special exhibit is on. See that they share in the use of whatever

recreational facilities the community provides for all its children: swimming pools, boating, tennis courts, skating rinks. When there is a public festival or parade or concert, make sure they have a chance to enjoy it, preferably as individuals and not as a group from the Home.

Familiarize them with the surrounding countryside or the city of which your institution is a part. Local scenic beauties and historical spots of interest should be part of their background and can be tied up with their reading. Older children through what they learn about these matters at school can lead younger children in the institution into interest in their community. Arrange sight-seeing trips to local industries.

Even the local movies should be wide open to your children just as they are to other children, for though you may or may not like Hollywood's productions, though you may feel that many pictures aren't fit for children, they are part of the national scene. What children get or don't get out of a picture is entirely determined by their experience; in other words, certain things pass over their heads and what they don't know doesn't hurt them. Though you should encourage them to go to the worth-while pictures in order to help them to form good taste, remember that the worst as well as the best movies are what they will run into when they go out into the world. If every picture is hand-picked during childhood, they are not sharing normal American experience and will never develop

the ability to select for themselves what is desirable.

Often the housemother who tries to help her children to live in the world is up against very real handicaps such as institutional policy or geographical isolation. But such limitations must be recognized, brought to the attention of the superintendent, and overcome where it is humanly possible. You have your choice. You can take the easier way of keeping your children mentally and physically confined within the boundaries of your institution, making them unhappily set apart now and hurting their chances of taking their due place in the world of affairs later on; or you can devote courage, thought, and energy to making available the wealth of stimulating experiences from without, to give them present enjoyment and the future ability to become independent, productive adults.

You have the power, too, to enrich your children from within, spiritually.

16 *Your Children's Religion*

True religion is something deeper and higher than regular attendance at church. It is faith, love, and right living; worship, at its best, helps a child to realize these goals. Religious experience can be a source of serenity, assurance, and joy.

If you yourself are radiant, cheerful, and sincerely religious; if you exemplify those fundamentals of all faiths, justice, kindness, reverence, and love, you give your children religion in the most effective way, for as Dean Inge put it, "Religion is caught and not taught." But even if you fall short of this ideal, you can do much to make religion meaningful for your boys and girls.

Although prayers sanctioned by a church and taught to all its members have an important place, unthinking repetition can make them lose much of their inspiration and significance. Mornings and evenings are good times for intimate contacts, so use them to help your children to personalize their prayers. Have them feel

free to talk over with you their individual hopes and ambitions so they can use these as material for prayers of aspiration. At bedtime they might consider the joys and achievements as well as the disappointments and failures of the day as suitable content for prayers.

Grace at table affords a fine opportunity for un-stereotyped worship. If your children always chant an identical grace it will have less meaning than if they have some choice as to its form. Encourage them to give thanks in simple children's graces or to make up their own. At times let grace be sung.

The more that children (or, indeed, grown-ups) participate in worship instead of merely sitting by, the more religion becomes a real and fruitful part of them. In some institutions the children plan and conduct their own vespers. Just as you work with the nurse in matters of health, so work with the director of religious education in your institution. In a large one he may be the chaplain; in a small one the pastor, priest, or rabbi of a local church or synagogue.

Tie in religion with the arts of music, literature, and painting. When religious music is played on the talking machine or radio, encourage children occasionally to join in the singing. Have Bible readings not only as a source of faith and prayer but for stories which, at times, your children can dramatize. Tell them stories of the lives of religious leaders. Make excursions to an art gallery, if one is accessible, or show reproduc-

tions of the works of the great masters, explaining the pictures as combined religion and art.

Social life, too, can be meaningfully combined with religion if your children belong to some young people's society sponsored by a church.

Should a child ask you questions about religious matters like God or Heaven, answer as best you can, being sure to qualify with something like, "Anyway, that's what I believe." Get help from the clergy when the questions are beyond your depth.

Some children rebel against going to services on Sunday mornings, particularly if they are required to sit together, the most common reason being that it marks them as "poor children from the Home." Others come from families which never entered a church. It is desirable to suggest to such children: "It's what we all do here."

If a boy or girl wants to join a church different from your own, ask your superintendent to get in touch with its pastor so that he may give the child his interpretation of what joining his church involves. Neither try to dissuade a child from becoming a member of a particular religious group nor coerce him into it. It is, however, your great privilege to help him to develop his religious understanding, feeling, and faith, as it is to aid in building up in him everything worth while, everything that will help him to become a happier, surer person, all the time he is in your care from the first moment to the last.

17 *A Child's Last Few Days in the Home*

If you have done your job well all along, a child ready to leave the institution will have pleasant memories of his stay with you. During his last few days, however, a little more needs to be done to round out your good work.

Both you and the child ought to be informed in advance by the social worker or superintendent that he is leaving so that he is not whisked away without warning and can get used to the idea of another home and surroundings. It will relieve much of his anxiety and uncertainty if he knows where he is going.

Check all his clothes to be sure they are in good shape. He should be free to take with him all personal possessions he cherishes.

Unless circumstances make it hard for him, stage a little farewell party.

If he has been a useful worker, guard against the temptation of trying to persuade the authorities to keep him just a little longer because you don't know

how you are going to get along without him. It is a sad fact that boys and girls are sometimes prevented from leaving institutions when they could and should because consciously or unconsciously someone is putting maintenance or farming or housework or cooking needs before children's.

Be sure to make a child about to depart feel that he had a place in the group and the institution and that he will be missed. Make it clear that you will always be glad to see him.

When children have had long stays in institutions, often they are fearful of leaving, for at best institutional life is more sheltered and protected than life outside. Talk with a child to help him overcome such fear; if necessary, get the social worker's help.

Though the last few days are not so crucial as the first few days, work well begun is worth finishing well, too. And throughout their stay with you, what you are and what you exemplify will influence your children.

18 *About You and Your Job*

As fundamental and important as your children's good health is your own; an ailing, continually fatigued housemother cannot properly meet her children's needs. If you have any correctible physical defects, attend to them. Get a general physical checkup at least once a year. If you find that you become annoyed and tired out by the confusion, the quarreling, and the demands normal in a group of active, healthy children, the answer is not to repress the children but to take stock of yourself. Should you come to the conclusion that you are too old, or too tired, or physically too much below par to expend the enormous amount of energy that care of children entails, you serve both them and yourself best by seeking some other less draining and fatiguing kind of work.

To maintain the health you have, live as hygienically as possible; eat a balanced diet and get plenty of sleep and fresh air. Enjoy yourself on your days off

in ways that will take you back to your children refreshed by the change.

Your personal grooming should be an example of neatness and cleanliness and attractiveness. If your institution requires uniforms, you will have to wear them, but the desirable way for a housemother to dress is to wear exactly the same kind of gay housedresses a mother wears when she is busy about her home.

Your manners, also, should always serve as a good example to your children; they will acquire good manners more easily and effectively through imitation than through precepts. It is curious how even people who have excellent manners with other adults are downright rude to children. For instance, no one with any pretense of good breeding would expose adults to peremptory commands, sharp reproofs, sarcastic answers, or loud exclamations of disapproval. She would not interrupt an adult, or rudely contradict him, or snap out, "Can't you see I'm busy?" or order him to "sit and be quiet," or criticize his appearance before others—yet how many women think it is perfectly all right to act this way with children! A safe rule to bear in mind is: never speak to a child in a manner you wouldn't employ with an adult.

A sense of humor is innate and hard to acquire; if you have one you are fortunate and so are your children. Try your best not to lose yours under the burden of your job.

For, frankly, a housemother's job rightly performed is difficult at best and, at worst, crushing. In many institutions housemothers are overburdened with so many children in their groups, so many household tasks, and, for lack of special seamstresses, so much sewing, that they can give but little attention to what is most important, their children's emotional needs. In many institutions hours are too long and wages insufficient for the housemothers easily to lead the full life making for the fresh, vigorous personality essential in the care of children.

Back of poor working conditions is society's failure to realize the importance of the housemother's (sometimes even the real mother's) job, which is often considered on the level of domestic work.

You as an individual cannot change this lamentable underestimation of your work, or, overnight, create a revolution in hours and wages. Recognition of the importance of taking the place of Mother is, however, sure to come, as it has come to that other form of humane and gentle service, nursing. Not many years ago nurses were considered little more than lowly drudges. Today they are members of a distinguished profession requiring years of training.

Though there is a definite trend towards improvement of conditions for housemothers, until the day comes when wages, hours, and status are commensurate with the service they perform, you must get most of your reward in rejoicing in your great value to the

children who so pitifully need you rather than in financial or professional recognition. Each one who goes out from your institution healthier and happier for your care, better able to live comfortably with himself and others, represents definite achievement far greater than most people's, and the sum total of young lives you will have warmed and made more fruitful becomes thrilling. Realizing this, you transcend such disadvantages as your job may have; and imbued with the spirit of service, you, as well as your children, should have a rich, inspiring, and satisfying life.



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